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ABSTRACT

Tarrant County Junior College (TCJC) was organized in 1965. It adopted its first affirmative action plan in 1973 and has had a plan ever since. Although neither controversial nor wholeheartedly accepted by everyone, the plan has worked. In 1973, 13.9% of TCJC's employees were minority group members; in 1985, there are 1,280 employees with 21.4% minority, with the major percentage increases among faculty and professional groups. The following affirmative action/equal opportunity efforts are among those that have proved effective at TCJC: (1) appointment of a person within the higher ranks of the institution who is responsible for the administration of the affirmative action/equal opportunity activities; (2) appointment of minority group employees in high ranking positions; (3) creation of a welcoming climate; (4) inclusion of minorities as program participants and guests at public programs such as graduations, dedications, and public forums; (5) placement of advertisements in the media to ensure that minority communities are aware of the college; (6) inclusion of minorities in all official publications of the college; (7) communication of the school's commitment to affirmative action to all of the people at the college and to the general public; (8) review of all policies and procedures to assure that they are fair and appear to be fair; (9) advertisement of vacant positions to let employees know what the college's employment needs are; and (10) provision of opportunities for employees to air their grievances, ask questions, and get straight answers. Charts showing affirmative action gains of TCJC are included. (AYC)

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INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

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Paper presented at the 65th Annual National Convention
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San Diego, California
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INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Your college intends to obey the laws and regulations of the United States. It is your college's policy to offer equal employment and educational opportunities to all people in every aspect of education and employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin or handicap.

There are many good reasons why one may think the idea and philosophy of equal opportunity is extremely hard to attain. It is agreed that it is, indeed, hard to attain. Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of running your institution may be one of guaranteeing equal opportunity.

First of all, if an institution is to have equal opportunity, its administrators, supervisors, managers, and department chairpersons must all be committed to do their share. Without their share, the load becomes very heavy for whoever is charged with the day to day responsibilities for equal opportunity.

Perhaps it should also be pointed out that there is a difference between equal opportunity and affirmative action. You can have either one without the other. Equal opportunity means that you have designed your systems so that they do not discriminate against anyone. This means that you do not take any factor other than those related to the ability to do the work into account as you hire, promote, train, fire or carry out any other area of employment. This means that you look at an applicant's or an employee's abilities, past accomplishments and assessment for future contributions to your institution. You can do all of this to the letter and not take any affirmative action to make sure it happens.

Prepared by Joe B. Rushing, Chancellor, and Erma C. Johnson, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, both of Tarrant County Junior College, Ft. Worth, Texas.

Affirmative actions means that you take steps to insure that you attract applicants--and in the case of promotions, employees--from all segments of your service area.

It is generally true that if you have fairly large numbers of people in your service area from ethnic minority groups, you will be able to recruit some of them for your staff. And, of course, you recruit from all over anyway for faculty and professional staff.

You can take affirmative action to get members from various ethnic groups to apply and then find that you have not provided an equal opportunity for them to be hired.

Affirmative action is by far the easier of the two to accomplish. It's the equal opportunity part that becomes the big challenge.

How do you manage that kind of challenge? Well, I don't have all the answers, but I can tell you about some of the things that have worked for us at Tarrant County Junior College:

- *Board commitment to the philosophy of equal opportunity and affirmative action. By the way, the only time you need to worry about affirmative action is when your workforce is not representative of your service area. Equal opportunity should be a permanent part of your institutional policies.*
- *CEO commitment. Sometimes this may come before the board's commitment. That's O.K. If the board enjoys the kind of atmosphere that insulates it somewhat from the outside world, it may very well be the CEO who initiates policy recommendations to his/her board. CEO commitment is all encompassing. It has to include all areas*

of operation of the institution—not just employment. Among the many areas, it includes:

- *Advice to the Board about sensitive minority issues that may bear on the image of the institution as it deliberates policies.*

- *Appointment of a person within the higher ranks of the institution who is responsible for the administration of the AA & EEO activities. If that person is from one of the minority groups served by your area, he/she may be more effective. If that person also has more than just AA & EEO responsibilities you get even more effectiveness.*

- *Appointment of other minority employees in high ranking positions. It's easy to make your workforce percentage of minorities grow by adding more and more custodial, maintenance and clerical employees. It's more difficult to increase those percentages in the faculty, professional and administrative areas.*

- *Creation of a climate that says "welcome" to everyone. When minorities feel a part of your institution, they are more likely to take advantage of it. The more integrated your staff is, the more minorities are likely to feel that they can succeed—either as a student or as an employee.*

- *The CEO of an institution by the very nature of his/her position, is thrust in the spotlight in the community. If you can manage to have several minority administrative employees who can be seen as good representatives of the college it helps*

tremendously. So when you are recruiting or promoting, keep that in mind. Having the right minorities in key positions in the institution helps the minority communities feel greater ownership. The feeling of ownership helps foster a better EEO and AA climate.

- *Use of public programs sponsored by the institution such as graduations, dedications, and public forums to foster your EEO & AA efforts. Include minorities, both as program participants and as guests. Again, this gives the minority communities a greater feeling of ownnership. People generally feel kinder toward things that belong to them.*

- *Include minorities—all the time—when sponsoring display booths, newspaper, television and radio advertisements. Then make sure the minority communities learn what you have done. Advertise in media where you know they will hear and see your ads.*

- *Include minorities in all official publications of the institution when you have photographs. (Use an example of TCJC 20/20 Vision and Setting the Standard.) This has to be a very conscious effort on your part. After all, you want your publications to accurately portray your institution. If you have diversity, show it off.*

- *Extend your open-door policy to your adversaries—if you have them. Create the atmosphere that will make it extremely difficult for them to successfully wage war against you without first giving you an opportunity to deal with their grievances. Here is another area where minority members of your staff can be of great help to the institution. If those minority members are well known by the minority communities, it is unlikely that they will be ignored when a problem arises.*

- *Borrow some techniques from the computer industry and make your institution "User Friendly." When you are figuring out ways to make it "User Friendly," you will probably decide that the more your workforce resembles the general population of your service area, the more "User Friendly" it appears to the users.*

- *Finally, Communicate. Communicate your attitudes and commitment to all the people at your institution and to the general public. Let them know how you feel about your institution's commitment to AA and EEO. Show them the results of your efforts. Show them your specialized programs and services that are designed to meet special needs of students and staff; show them the employees you have at all levels of your organization who are helping the institution attain its goals. Show them your efforts to help minority students graduate and/or attain their goals at the same rate that white students graduate and/or attain their goals. Show them the institutional involvement in the community that zeros in on problem areas where it can make a difference. (Mention some of the Community Campus specialized programs aimed at minority communities such as Home Health Care programs, Senior Citizens programs, Geriatrics Nurses Aid program, and the Food Service Training program)*

Tarrant County Junior College was organized in 1965. It held its first classes in the fall of 1967. It employed minority employees from day one—not many, but some. It enrolled minority students from day one.

TCJC's Board of Trustees adopted its first Affirmative Action plan in 1973. The college has had a plan ever since. It has never been one that was highly controversial. Naturally,

it has not been wholeheartedly accepted by everyone; however, it has worked. It has brought us from 765 employees with 13.9% minority to 1280 employees with 21.4% minority today. The major percentage increases of minority employees have been in the faculty and professional groups.

An underlying factor involved in the AA and EEO arena is the understanding of how overall institutional policies and procedures can affect your AA & EEO efforts. Good personnel policies and procedures are the backbone for a good EEO & AA climate. You should scrutinize all policies and procedures to assure that they <u>are</u> fair and <u>appear</u> to be fair.

But good personnel practices are also very good for everyone associated with the institution. For example, the law does not require that you advertise your vacant positions, but we do. We do because it is good for business.

- *Let your employees know what your employment needs are. We advertise all professional, faculty and administrative positions a minimum of four weeks. All other positions are advertised for five working days. This is a simple thing, but it buys a lot of goodwill for the college. This keeps our current employees informed. It r[illegible] them feel as though they know what's going on at the college; that there are no secrets. Before we adopted the AA guidelines, our employees felt they didn't know what was happenig. Now as a result of our advertising, employees rarely say "I didn't know we had a new position, or I didn't know we were reorganizing." (Mention 24-hour job line.)*

- *Provide opportunities for your employees to air their grievances, ask questions and get straight answers. Have someone in the organization who is capable of*

solving EEO problems before they get to outside agencies. And who can work effectively with outside agencies in solving the few that will inevitably get to them. Complaints--even those that have no validity--that get before the public have a way of undermining the positive EEO image that your institution wants to portray. (Mention First Mondays with Joe Rushing.)

It goes without saying that AA plans are worth no more than the paper on which they are written if that is the way the institution wishes it to be.

There has been much debate about the EEO laws and affirmative action. Some feel that it should be a national agenda item that should stay in the national spotlight. Others feel that EEO and AA are absolutely ridiculous and always discriminate against somebody. Nevertheless, EEO is a lawful requirement and must be acknowledged as such. AA is quite often court ordered, and even though courts disagree on the issues, there are many instances where taking affirmative action to increase opportunities for minorities have paid off for higher educational institutions. Admittedly, there is a delicate balance to be achieved in addressing the AA efforts of an institution. I think that balance is attainable, and I think it is worth the effort.

COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS OF TCJCD WORK FORCE
SEPTEMBER, 1973 and SEPTEMBER 1984

	TOTAL		BLACK				HISPANIC			
			MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE	
	1973	1984	1973	1984	1973	1984	1973	1984	1973	1984
Administrative	76	116	1	6	1	6	0	3	1	1
Professional Non-Faculty	10	23	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	1
Faculty	300	449	4	16	7	22	5	9	0	9
Secretarial/ Clerical	153	356	2	3	12	39	1	1	5	18
Technical Para-Professional	80	94	1	5	3	8	2	1	0	1
Skilled Crafts	-	11	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0
Service/ Maintenance	127	199	22	49	18	34	3	11	0	3
Security	19	32	3	5	0	2	2	1	0	1
TOTAL	765	1280	36	85	43	112	14	26	7	34

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COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS OF TCJCD WORK FORCE
SEPTEMBER, 1973 and SEPTEMBER 1984

	TOTAL		AMERICAN INDIAN				ASIAN			
			MALE		FEMALE		MALE		FEMALE	
	1973	1984	1973	1984	1973	1984	1973	1984	1973	1984
Administrative	76	116	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Professional Non-Faculty	10	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faculty	300	449	0	4	0	1	3	4	0	0
Secretarial/ Clerical	153	356	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	1
Technical Para-Professional	80	94	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Skilled Crafts	-	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Service/ Maintenance	127	199	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Security	19	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	765	1280	2	4	0	4	3	7	2	2

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COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS OF TCJCD WORK FORCE SEPTEMBER, 1973 and SEPTEMBER 1984

	TOTAL		MALE TOTAL		FEMALE TOTAL		MINORITY TOTAL	
	1973	1984	1973	1984	1973	1984	1973	1984
Administrative	76	116	63	78	13	38	5	18
Professional Non Faculty	10	23	5	9	5	14	5	3
Faculty	300	449	183	251	117	198	19	65
Secretarial/clerical	153	356	3	20	150	336	20	66
Technical Para-Professional	80	94	41	38	39	56	8	15
Skilled Crafts	-	11	-	11	-	0	-	0
Service/Maintenance	127	199	104	147	23	52	43	98
Security	19	32	19	23	0	9	7	9
TOTAL	765	1280	418	577	347	703	107	274

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